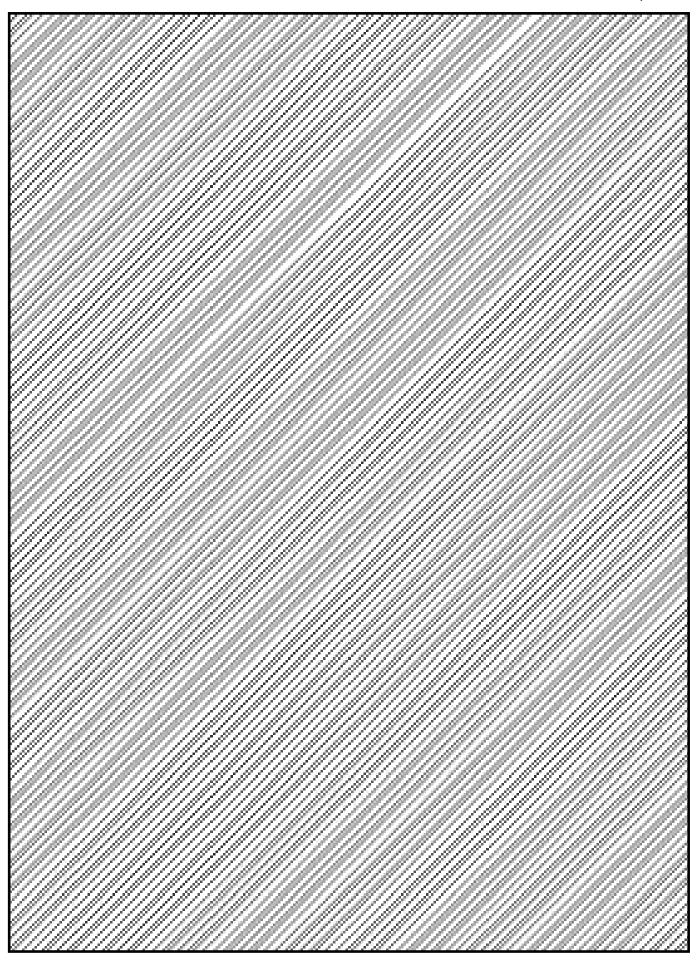
SAN DIEGO COUNTY HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TERRORISM

PROGRESS REPORT

June 24, 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Participating Organizations	i
Mission Statement	ii
Subcommittees and Reporting Groups	ii
Introduction	1
Background	3
Highlights of Progress	4
Communications Collaborative Subcommittee	4
Workforce Utilization Subcommittee	5
Laboratory Subcommittee	5
Community and Professional Education Subcommittee	6
Children and Youth Terrorism Preparedness Subcommittee	6
Base Hospital/Base Clinic System Development Subcommittee	7
Chemical and Biological Pharmacy Preparedness Subcommittee	7
Base Stations Physicians Committee Reporting Group	8
Border Coordination Reporting Group	8
Local Military Health Leadership Reporting Group	9
San Diego Healthcare Disaster Council Reporting Group	9
Conclusion	10



PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

- **Biosystems Research Institute**
- Board of Supervisors District 4
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Children's Hospital and Health Center Lifemark
- City of San Diego Emergency Medical
 Mental Health Advisory Board Services
- **■** Council on Community Clinics
- County of San Diego
 - County Counsel Office
 - County Veterinarian
 - Environmental Health
 - Health and Human Services Agency
 - Children's Mental Health
 - **Epidemiology**
 - ◆ Medical Care Program Administration
 - Policy and Planning
 - **Public Health Services**
 - Community Epidemiology
 - Emergency Medical Services
 - Immunizations
 - Public Health Nursing
 - Public Health Laboratory
 - Office of Disaster Preparedness
 - Science Advisory Board
 - Sheriff
- DMAT SD CA-4Disaster Medical Assistance Team San Diego
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Healthcare Association of San Diego & Imperial Counties

- Healthlink
- Kaiser Permanente
 - Ambulatory Care
 - Environmental Health and Safety
 - Infection Control

- Poison Control Center
- San Diego County Medical Society
- San Diego State University
 - College of Health and Human Services
 - Graduate School of Public Health
 - Institute of Public Health
- **Scripps Health**
- Scripps/Mercy Hospital
- **Sharp Memorial Hospital**
- San Diego Society of Hospital **Pharmacies**
- **United States Navy**
 - Division of Population Health/Dept. **Utilization Management**
 - Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton
 - Naval Medical Center, San Diego
- University of California San Diego
 - Physical Sciences
 - Research & Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

he Mission of this San Diego County Health Advisory Committee on Terrorism is to guide a process for strategic leadership, direction, coordination, and assessment of activities to ensure local readiness, interagency collaboration, and health preparedness for terrorism, infectious disease outbreaks and other public health threats and emergencies and to advise the Health and Human Services Agency, the Metropolitan Medical Response System, the Health Care Association of San Diego County, the San Diego County Medical Society, the Council of Community Clinics, academia and other partners responsible for local medical and public health preparedness and terrorism response planning.

SUBCOMMITTEES AND REPORTING GROUPS

he committee has two co-chairs; one represents the private health care community and one is a senior County public health official. There are eleven subcommittees or reporting groups:

- Communications Collaborative Subcommittee
- Workforce Utilization Subcommittee
- Laboratory Subcommittee
- Community and Professional Education Subcommittee
- Children and Youth Terrorism Preparedness Subcommittee
- Base Hospital/Base Clinic System Development Subcommittee
- Chemical/Biological Pharmacy Subcommittee
- Base Stations Physicians Committee Reporting Group
- Border Coordination Reporting Group
- Local Military Health Leadership Reporting Group
- San Diego Healthcare Disaster Council Reporting Group

INTRODUCTION

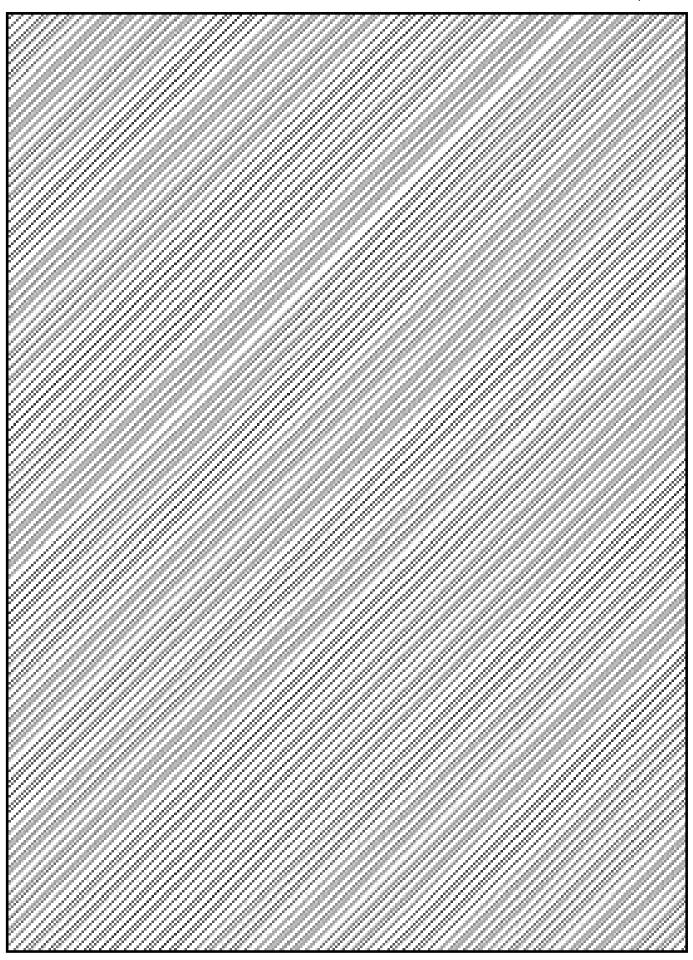
his Report describes highlights of the progress through May 2002 of the San Diego County Health Advisory Committee on Terrorism. The committee is a public/private collaborative partnership formed after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent anthrax attacks that occurred on the East Coast. This collaborative committee brings together multiple institutions, agencies, and disciplines, including the local military and law enforcement, to focus on terrorism related health issues. The committee is developing plans and coordinating efforts related to medical and public health terrorism preparedness and response.

Highlights of the committee's accomplishments to date include:

- Direct clinical education to healthcare providers through 200-plus courses and presentations,
- Establishment of a new hospital and healthcare disaster council to directly affect preparedness levels at area hospitals and healthcare facilities,
- Emergency response training for more than 100 pharmacists to assist with community-based mass prophylaxis strategies,
- Development of strategies for the mobilization and utilization of clinical volunteers,
- Provision of tabletop exercises simulating risk communication after the release of smallpox or anthrax.

The committee includes public and private sector representatives from the Health and Human Services Agency, the Health Care Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties, the San Diego County Medical Society, the Council of Community Clinics and many other entities such as law enforcement jurisdictions, academic organizations and the military.

The work of the partnership builds on the existing public health, health care, emergency medical care and disaster preparedness systems. The committee's work enhances these systems and increases the protection of the health of our community, not just during times of crisis, but also during times of peace. This progress report describes the committee's mission, subcommittees and background; work completed thus far; and plans for future work.



BACKGROUND

an Diego County has many assets that may make the region vulnerable to terrorist attack, including one of the busiest international borders in the world, large military complexes, numerous tourism and sporting event sites, and an internationally renowned convention center. Terrorism preparedness planning began in San Diego County in 1997 when the United States Public Health Service provided funding to establish the Metropolitan Medical Strike Team (MMST). Initially established as a chemical response infrastructure, the MMST was restructured in 1999 to include response to biologic weapons and was renamed the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS).

September 11, 2001 placed terrorism on the front page of every newspaper in the United States and abroad. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's Public Health Officer, Dr. George Flores organized the San Diego County Health Advisory Committee on Terrorism and became a Co-chair. Dr. Bud Beck, Senior Vice President and Chief of Community Health for Scripps Health was elected Co-chair by the Committee membership. Committees such as this Advisory Committee have demonstrated success in several jurisdictions across the nation. As a result, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recently identified such Committees as a critical factor in preparing for a local public health emergency.

The work described in this report focuses only on the work of the Advisory Committee, and does not reflect all disaster-planning issues or efforts underway throughout the County. In addition to its other roles, this committee acts as the Bioterrorism Advisory Committee of the San Diego Metropolitan Response System, complements previous planning and will take into consideration future strategies identified by agencies responsible for community-wide emergency health planning efforts.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRESS

ighlights of the progress of each subcommittee and reporting group, including the goals, objectives, tasks, steps, work up to this point, an/or future plans, are provided below.

COMMUNICATIONS COLLABORATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Develop a plan for communication to the public through the media, the provider community and other appropriate channels regarding health risks associated with terrorist events and effective public response before, during, and after an emergency.

The Communications Collaborative brings together both health and communications experts from key organizations related to community health preparedness.

It has developed objectives, including:

- Manage and coordinate the dissemination of information before, during and after a crisis.
- Develop risk communication strategies for relaying timely information to the public designed to decrease anxiety and direct the actions of the general public.
- Prepare a list of community and County experts able to speak on various aspects of potential public health threats.
- ◆ Research and fill communication "gaps" between organizations.
- Develop communication strategies for informing and educating all diverse populations of San Diego including the handicapped, mentally ill, non-English speakers, children and the elderly.
- Explain to the public what the County and its partners are doing to prepare for emergencies, and inform individuals how to prepare their homes and families.

The Communications Collaborative has periodically hosted risk communication workshops attended by a wide variety of community, hospital and governmental organizations. These workshops were designed as tabletop exercises to build skills and identify opportunities for improvements.

WORKFORCE UTILIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Identify the healthcare workforce and develop policies for communication and mobilization in case of an emergency, as well as identify required and recommended training.

This subcommittee brings together or links with key partners to define and clarify responsibilities. It has reviewed the County Operational Area Emergency Plan and discussed appropriate revisions.

Future work plan steps include:

- ◆ Develop strategies for the mobilization, processing and utilization of clinical volunteers.
- Develop a template policy for emergency report-to-work procedures for community health centers and independent physician offices,
- ◆ Develop a communications system between the County, community clinics, private physician offices and the base clinic system.
- ◆ Conduct tabletop exercise to check ability to mobilize clinical workforce.

LABORATORY SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Enhance the microbiology capability in laboratories within San Diego County and, specifically, for the local Laboratory Response Network participants.

This subcommittee brings together local laboratories within the Laboratory Response Network.

It has developed objectives, including:

- Develop operational plans and protocols that support the development of a local program to ensure rapid and effective laboratory services in support of a response to bioterrorism, and other infectious disease outbreaks, other public health threats and emergencies.
- ◆ Integrate Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) capabilities into local response protocols. PCR allows for the rapid analysis of biological samples.
- ◆ Develop a list of contact information for each lab to enable seven days a week, 24 hours a day contact with personnel in the event of an emergency.
- Develop a written laboratory surge capacity plan.

COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Increase awareness and readiness of the San Diego County health care community through training and dissemination of focused, accurate and current information on bioterrorism.

This subcommittee includes the County of San Diego, San Diego County Medical Society, UCSD and others.

Short-term goals include:

- Rapidly disseminate basic medical information regarding potential bioterrorism agents to health care providers who may see patients, including physicians, nurses and other professional staff.
- Disseminate an educational CD-ROM to selected health care providers to be utilized for training additional personnel.

Various members of this subcommittee distributed a "Primer on Bioterrorism" to more than 5,000 physicians. In addition, the subcommittee provided direct clinical education through more than 200 courses and presentations.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Address the unique needs of children in the overall community-wide terrorism preparedness effort by working with schools throughout the county.

This subcommittee brings together representatives from the County administration and various educational institutions to identify issues that need to be addressed.

It has developed objectives, including:

- Train school nurses to recognize symptoms related to bioterrorism and to identify relevant patterns of absenteeism.
- Conduct County Emergency Plan training for Safe School Coordinators and other school personnel.
- Revise schools' safety plans to include a focus on bioterrorism threats.
- ♦ May provide training to senior school site staff on "shelter-in-place" strategies

BASE HOSPITAL/BASE CLINIC SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Develop a communications network that will interface the ambulatory medical groups and community and other outpatient clinics with the existing San Diego County Base Hospital system. This subcommittee has identified the ambulatory medical groups and clinics, has contacted key personnel, and is continuing joint planning.

This subcommittee has developed objectives, including:

- Identify facility capabilities (e.g., staff, hours of operation, bed capacity, resources, etc.).
- Perform a needs assessment (e.g., equipment, training and other resource needs).
- ◆ Make recommendations for integrating base hospitals with community outpatient clinics via a new communications network.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PHARMACY PREPAREDNESS SUBCOMMITTEE

Goal: Coordinate the preparation and response of pharmacies to chemical or biological terrorism through education, planning for distribution of emergency medications and coordination of personnel during a disaster.

This subcommittee links the San Diego Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists and the San Diego County Pharmacist Association and has identified issues, objectives and tasks.

Issues include:

- Manpower
- Response
- Medication security and availability
- Education of area pharmacists
- Monitoring of community antibiotic-use
- Reporting of inventory
- ◆ Distribution
- ◆ Communication
- Website links

Recently, this subcommittee sponsored a seminar program to train pharmacists in bioterrorism topics and to plan for responding and assisting in community-based mass prophylaxis operations.

BASE STATIONS PHYSICIANS COMMITTEE REPORTING GROUP

This Reporting Group composed of the Base Hospital Physician Medical Directors, provides advice to the County EMS Medical Director on pre-hospital treatment protocols, policies and procedures.

Purpose: This Reporting Group creates a formal reporting link between the already existing San Diego Base Station Physicians Committee (BSPC) and the Advisory Committee.

This group can provide expertise on new pre-hospital health care needs and have experts prepared to speak on out-of-hospital aspects of disaster care. The group has identified goals, objectives and needs.

Examples of tasks include:

- Conduct needs analysis of pre-hospital and emergency department capacity for terrorist events including a confidential blind survey of system capabilities and obstacles
- Perform tabletop drills to assess current EMS system readiness
- ◆ Invite experts to conduct educational courses on EMS preparations for terrorism-related events

BORDER COORDINATION REPORTING GROUP

Purpose: This Reporting Group creates a reporting link to the Advisory Committee on aspects of preparedness and response that are related to San Diego County's location on the United States - Mexico Border.

Since last fall several meetings have been held among representatives from the County, the State of California, Tijuana and Baja California to discuss responses to bioterrorism aimed at the border region. This topic was also discussed at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Border Infectious Disease Surveillance meeting in March. The State's plan for their expenditures from the CDC Bioterrorism Program includes modest funding for elements related to the border.

This group has developed several local recommendations, including:

- Consider addressing relevant border issues with part of the border Counties' Bioterrorism Program funds
- Promote the development of a legal agreement between the US and Mexico that will improve the exchange of disease surveillance information between the two countries.
- ◆ Develop a directory of key persons and resources relevant to bioterrorism in both San Diego and Tijuana.

LOCAL MILITARY HEALTH LEADERSHIP REPORTING GROUP

Purpose: This Reporting Group creates a reporting link between the local military health leadership and the Advisory Committee.

The military in San Diego has always been an active participant in local counter-terrorism and disaster planning. They also actively participate in several local response teams. After the military has assured the safety of the United States from assault, the resources of the military may be directed to aid in disaster mitigation and relief. This ranges from manpower to the use of equipment and supplies and the provision of services.

Listed below are a few examples of the resources the military may contribute specifically related to biological and chemical terrorism mitigation:

- ◆ Hospital and clinic services (including the USNS Mercy or Comfort if available)
- ◆ Environment Preventive Medicine Units (EPMU #5 is based locally)
- Chemical, biological and radiological detection, analysis, decontamination and personal protective equipment and personnel
- Vehicles, ships and aircraft

Additionally, the Naval Medical Center San Diego is the local Federal Coordination Center for the National Disaster Medical System.

SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE DISASTER COUNCIL REPORTING GROUP

Purpose: This Reporting Group creates a reporting link between the already existing San Diego Healthcare Disaster Council and the Advisory Committee.

This group works on issues that influence the potential impact of terrorism on the local hospital and healthcare communities. This group establishes local guidelines related to:

- Decontamination operations
- ◆ Personal protective equipment
- Safety operations
- Engineering operations
- Command and control operations
- Medication stockpiling

This group also sends representatives to several local and state committees to provide technical and legislative advice. They have already established several guidelines for hospitals to use as part of their preparedness efforts.

CONCLUSION

he residents of San Diego County can be proud of the work the many public and private partners have completed in addressing countywide disaster preparedness. As outlined in this document progress has been made in building upon the existing public health infrastructure to meet the needs of our community in peacetime and in the event of a terrorist attack. There is a great deal left to do.

By July 31, 2002 each subcommittee will develop rank ordered task lists and timelines in two categories. The first list will identify items yet to be done that can be accomplished without additional funding. The second list and time line will indicate efforts to be accomplished that need additional funds. These funds will be actively sought. The Centers for Disease Control Local Guidance for Supplemental Funding for Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism criteria, where relevant, will serve as a template for compiling task lists.

- 1. The Committee may take on additional activities suggested by its members and readers of this Report. These will include such items as a catalogue of possible biological and chemical agents that could be used by terrorists.
- 2. The Committee looks forward to presenting information to the County Board of Supervisors' Regional Security Commission on matters related to medical and public health terrorism preparedness and response. The Committee plans to develop strong links with the Regional Network for Homeland Security (UCSD-SDSU/private industry technology collaboration) and the San Diego County Health Care Provider Leadership Coalition.
- 3. During the next two months the committee will review the operational aspects of its function. This will include evaluating meeting frequency, composition of committee, need for consolidation or elimination of subcommittees and steps to integrate even more with the existing disaster preparedness efforts of the county.

Through continued collaboration and partnership between the public and private sectors, San Diego County will achieve an unprecedented public health infrastructure that is prepared to address and respond to any public health emergency.

